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ACQUISITIVE STATESMANSHIP

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I am not going to discuss the neutrality of the United States. It is, I presume, in good hands. At any rate, we cannot alter it. It *was* in good hands when Judge Moore had something to do with it. I wish to say a few words on the very elusive subject of the right of small nations to independence. This sounds something like a joke, after a review of the history of the past fifty years; yet our friends of South and Central America ought to be interested in it, at least academically. The fact is that the denial by us at times of that right, and the refusal of all the other leading civilized nations of the world to observe it, is what has been the real cause of all the wars of the last century. Each nation, in denying it, can always offer good pretexts to its own people and to the rest of the world. You cannot catch up with the modern international diplomat. He is always three leaps ahead of the rest of the people. A government may do anything if it has carefully prepared to issue the proper bulletins on the subject afterwards.

Let us begin with ourselves. The United States has been guilty, during the past 140 years, of several breaches of the ethical right which we are discussing. We must freely admit that fact before proceeding to criticize others. Doubtless we played the game on quite as high a plane as the international standards of the different epochs involved seemed to require. We evidently believed in the fundamental justice of the law of conquest. Certainly up to very recent times it has been well recognized that when a nation went to war with another it might take the other's territories or its colonies, among other things. And we have done it. Sometimes we have done this without going to war and sometimes by going to war. Of course there are many other nations which pursued this course on a larger scale, and there are other nations which circumstances prevented from doing it to so large an extent as they wished. These facts practically caused the present world struggle.

I do not believe at all in Peace Societies. I gladly and freely acknowledge the sincerity and high-mindedness of their work; I mean I do not believe that they are on the right track. You cannot make people stop fighting for loot simply by preaching godliness to them. If they were godly, they would not be fighting for loot. Then there are gentlemen who are so Utopian as to believe that we might create a red, white, blue, pink, green and yellow international police force, composed of warships and armies contributed by the various civilized nations of the world—I suppose on a per capita basis—and that after establishing a supreme arbitral tribunal, with this, I do not like to say motley, naval force back of it, wise and just decisions of all kinds in cases of international disputes could be effectively enforced. I do not think that the idea is practical. I cannot imagine, with patriotism defined and taught as it is today, with our civic education following the lines with which we are familiar, any ordinary person committing treason against his own country (and in time of war, of course, treason is defined as bearing arms or taking service against one's own flag); nor can I imagine that an international police force composed of ten or twelve different races and nationalities would bring about anything but ample opportunity for dispute, even in time of peace.

There remains the proposition of disarmament as a means of bringing about peace. After all, whatever we may start to talk about, what we are thinking about is peace—permanent world peace. There are people who sincerely believe that if the strong nations disarmed, or partially disarmed, continued peace would be rendered more possible, or more probable. History does not indicate anything of the sort. I have been unable to discover in my leisure moments the case of any nation which, unarmed, has been treated with more careful consideration by any other nation or nations because of the former's defenseless situation. There may have been such instances, but they are not recorded in history. Perhaps the Chinese Republic is the best example of an unoffending, unarmed and unaggressive nation, but it is suffering bitterly at the present time. So that, while it is true that great preparations for war, great armies and powerful navies, may set the hair-trigger, may render it easier for the ruling powers to bring about war, if they so desire, because the nations feel so well prepared for it, it is equally true that lack of preparation for defense has never pro-

tected any nation or people in the world, and it would be a very dangerous experiment, it seems to me, for the American people to endeavor to test out that theory just at this particular time. We have then the idea of a supreme arbitral tribunal which requires an international *posse comitatus*, as Colonel Roosevelt has suggested, to enforce its decrees, and we have the idea of disarmament, and I declare frankly, as a lover of peace, that I do not believe that either of the plans would produce peace. The question therefore becomes whether there is any tendency towards peace which we could further or encourage. I think that there is, if we are ready to face it.

I believe that the cause of every war in the past century, and many before that, has been acquisitive statesmanship, the wrongful lust for land, and the commerce and advantages flowing from it. It is the basic cause of the present war. There is not a nation with even a fifth rate statesman which cannot offer a perfectly good pretext for going to war; and, unfortunately, most of the people in the country always believe the pretext put forward by their own statesmen, and pay no attention at all to any arguments advanced by the other side. The result is that we have the almost incredible spectacle of eight or nine different nations, of relatively high civilization, ranged in a death struggle against each other, with the people of each nation sincerely believing—90 per cent of them at least—that its cause is just. It is not of any real importance whose cause is just, because it may well happen that the really just cause, practically speaking, will be defeated by the greater number of men, ships and cannon. The important point is: what state of diplomacy or what state of education exists in the world when nine nations can go to war, with not only the statesmen but the mass of the people of each believing that it is right? There is only one possible explanation, in my opinion, and that is that the people of those nations are in reality fighting for something very much nearer to them and more tangible than a theory of academic justice. The war has been put to them on racial lines, or on religious lines, or on the line of altruism, or on the line of the upholding of treaties, but the fact is that the real appeal is to something very much more solid, very much more practical than anything of that kind, and that appeal is to the long since familiar "larger national development." Can't you see those words when they appear in the official bluebooks and communiqués? It is this aspiration for more land

which at least one neutral nation in Europe is using today to inflame the war spirit of its people. What does that mean? What does it mean in the case of this neutral nation? It means "more territory," "more commerce," "more people to be taxed," more land over which to rule, and more people over which the flag might float. I would take great pleasure in uttering these same words to any audience in the world. We Americans are no more free from it than any other nation in the world. We have our own name for our national exploits. We free the oppressed. We do pretty well, all things considered. There is some good in everything, but I am thinking about the principle not of ethics, but of international custom which permits a nation on any pretext to violate the sovereignty of any other nation. The denial of this may sound rather radical, because war between sovereign peoples has been the fashion for thousands of years. But we have grown out of a great many fashions, and the fact is that until land, fixed by international boundaries, shall be recognized as inviolate, and until some other method of punishing a nation which infringes on the rights of other nations shall be found, war will continue, and no peace societies, arbitral tribunals, or international fleets, or anything of that kind, can possibly stop it. We have seen in the last fifty years a dozen flagrant and shameless violations of treaties, violations committed by the leading nations of the world, including, in one instance at least, the United States, where in a small or weak country there has been some little oppression of foreigners or other cause for the complaint which has been seized as a convenient pretext for the treaty violators, at home and abroad.

We have seen a whole continent practically divided up in the last twenty years. We see a large part of another great continent about to be divided up between two of the leading civilized nations of the world. We have over here two great continents whose future status is by no means permanently fixed, certainly not, if the principle is to be accepted by the world that strong naval or military power allows a nation or group of powers to dictate new international rights.

The United States and the American people who are neutral, officially, in this present struggle will probably come out of the situation disliked by all parties. We cannot do anything now but prepare for eventualities, except begin to think in larger terms than

those of counties and states. The great glaring defect in the international affairs of the American people is that they cannot think in broad terms. Let us begin by remembering that there are a great many nations in this world, contributing to its welfare and civilization in a high degree, and making life both interesting and profitable for all of us, which could never by any reasonable probability become great military powers. If these nations are to be wiped out, if they are to become subject peoples, merely because of their indisposition, as in the case of China, or their inability, as in the case of many smaller nations, to become great military powers, then the world will live in centuries more of strife. And if that is to be the future, the United States should become a military power as soon as possible. On the other hand, if there is such a thing as a manly appeal, if there is such a thing as an unselfish proposition in international affairs, let us put forth, in proper diplomatic language, at proper times and under proper conditions, a distinctly American doctrine, which has not to do with the interning of vessels or the shipment of arms, but declares that under all circumstances the integrity and sovereignty of all neutral nations as they exist shall be recognized, all pretexts to the contrary notwithstanding.

The first and most important result to flow from that declaration would be the way in which our neighbors to the south would regard us. I do not blame them for having the greatest suspicions of what American policy—(Yankee policy, as they call it)—means for them. I myself believe that those suspicions are unjustified, as do you, but I am speaking from their standpoint. We ought to put forth that doctrine for their sake. We ought to make it very clear to them that no matter what happens, no matter what the temptation or the crisis may be, or what interests may be involved, we will never take a hand in stealing from any other nation on the Western Hemisphere (nor, of course, elsewhere) a single square mile of territory under any pretext. It is possible that after we have proclaimed that and made good at it, we might get some other nations in the world to see the permanent value to peace of that doctrine. There is not very much unseized land left in the world except China, and she seems to be on the point of being altruistically taken in charge, so that we ought not to be considered entirely unreasonable when we suggest to them that all nations stop fighting among each other for the land which they have already divided up.

But the United States, you say, took the Philippine Islands purely for altruistic reasons. I know some will smile at this, because there are many people who really think that we are there for that reason, and we may be, but the fact is that the British say, the French say, the Russians say, and the Japanese say, "You found it convenient to rob poor old Spain when you were in a war with her, and you took the Philippine Islands." We quote our speeches in Congress and everything of that kind to prove that we are there for the welfare of the people. England is where she is all over the globe for that, and France is in a good part of Africa for that purpose, and Japan and Russia are struggling in one direction or another for that purpose. I am aware that this is a very unpopular line of conversation. I wouldn't go out and run for public office on this platform, but the fact is that it is impossible to make exceptions. It may well be that the great mass of us are sincere in our belief that we can govern better certain portions of the globe which we could hardly have found on the map seventeen years ago than could the people who were there for hundreds of years before us, or the people who were born there. It may also well be that a Russian form of government would be much better for the people of Constantinople than the present one. But that is not the point. The point is, is there anything practical about such a doctrine? Where would we stop?

How are we to demarcate acquisitive statesmanship from altruistic statesmanship, if you once admit you can take another's native land? Suppose that the intricacies and tendencies of international law do make it more difficult in future for a nation to pick a quarrel of conquest, it is easy for clever statesmen to devise new pretences. The right of conquest, the taking of territory by bald conquest, has already gone out of fashion. Now-a-days a weaker nation is rarely taken by conquest. There is a clash of interests, carefully advertised and worked up in advance, then the national commerce of the aggressor becomes vitally important, or a racial affinity is discovered which makes it necessary that one nation leap eight or nine hundred miles to stand by another nation in going to war. I only mention these things because we have grown used to them. Fine expressions may be very consoling to the people of the country being seized. But we all know that such things are merely a question of a pretext, and there can be no just pretext for taking the

land and the birthright of another people. Certainly the American people should never admit such a pretext, and if we do, it must be because of some finesse of diplomacy and international law.

When certain difficulties arise I can conceive that it would be almost easier to go in and "spank" a smaller nation than to reason with it, or to arbitrate. I think we have seen cases of that kind not so very long ago. But the vexations of self-restraint are much less than the difficulties which flow to the world at large from the admission of the doctrine of the right of the acquisition of territory belonging to another sovereign people. I should like to see the United States (and I suppose that we can do so at least as fittingly as any other nation) put forth this doctrine at the proper time, take it as their national slogan and await the result. We cannot impose it upon others, if they do not choose to accept it, and it will be hard at times to sit quietly by and see other nations reject it and profit by their attitude while we are following a principle. That is true, however, of every principle which is worth while. I should like to see our country do one thing more, at the same time that we are preparing to put forth that doctrine of the fixed balance of territory as a possible safeguard against war,—I should like to see established and maintained in this country an army and a navy so efficient and so large that, whatever the international situation might be, there could be no suspicion in the mind of any "doubting Thomas" anywhere in the world that we were putting forth this peaceful and generous doctrine from either weakness or fear.